

## Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Faculty's Preparation of Prospective Secondary Teacher Candidates for Instructing English Language Learners

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A university-wide secondary credential program (middle and high school) has engaged in systemic reform through professional development for content faculty to better equip prospective secondary teacher candidates for supporting the academic and social needs of English language learners (ELLs), particularly in urban schools. Data from five years of implementation (2007 to 2012) suggest that faculty across disciplines and colleges enhanced their beliefs, knowledge, and confidence with regard to how ELLs acquire content and academic English language through specific effective methods and strategies. This study suggests that university faculty participation in structured and purposeful professional development can strengthen their preparation of prospective secondary content prospective teachers for working with all students, including ELLs, in diverse secondary classrooms.

In the last 20 years, the cultural and linguistic landscape of the United States has changed dramatically. While the general K-12 student population merely grew 2.6% between 1995 and 2005, English language learners (ELLs) increased by 56% (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007). This growth has resulted in over five million ELLs in US schools, a 57% increase over the past decade (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). In California (one of the most densely populated and diverse states), for instance, public schools served over 1.5 million ELLs in the 2010 to 2011, 82.7% of whom speak Spanish, 2.7% Vietnamese, followed by less than 2% who speak multiple other languages (California Department of Education, 2011). The performance level of these students on every measure, from achievement scores to graduation rates, is lower than that of almost any other category of students (Gandara & Hopkins, 2010).

Research by Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian (2006) indicates ELLs need specific scaffolded instruction appropriate for their English proficiency levels rather than being placed in English-only settings with few accommodations. These students face multiple challenges in attaining academic content and skills while developing English proficiency. Hence, "good teaching" is not sufficient for ELLs because it tends to overlook their unique linguistic/cultural needs (de Jong & Harper, 2008). Specifically, ELLs need scaffolded instruction to facilitate their learning process (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), and flexible grouping structures to allow them to interact with peers and discuss content, problem solve situations, and complete projects (Reiss, 2008).

In states like California the sheer number of ELLs in public K-12 schools presents both an opportunity and a challenge to educators and administrators who must meet these students' complex academic and social needs. Because teachers must ensure that students

receive a rigorous and equitable education, they must know and be able to design standards-based and content-rich lessons and activities that are developmentally appropriate based on students' English language proficiency levels; it is only then that teachers can engage students in meaningful critical thinking and learning experiences while building on their prior knowledge and lived experiences (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2006).

In terms of access, students in schools heavily impacted with minority groups have less chance of being taught by well-qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Goodlad, 1990). In fact, up to 50% of less-qualified teachers work in schools serving low-income minority students (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). It is therefore essential that schools of education take radical steps toward overhauling the status quo and abandoning any ineffective business-as-usual practices by integrating tight coherence and integration courses, and extensive and intensely supervised clinical work blended with course work using pedagogies that link theory and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006b).

To address the aforementioned needs of ELLs, a grant-supported project, Secondary English Language Learner Success (SELLS), at an urban university, Seaside University (pseudonym), provided full-time and adjunct faculty participants with structured professional development (PD) to enhance their preparation of prospective secondary teachers to assist ELLs in developing academic language and content (Gomez-Zwiep, Benken, Nguyen, & Hakim-Butt, 2013). The major role of this 5-year project was to deepen faculty's understanding of the academic needs of ELLs; their ability to model and implement instruction that supports these students' acquisition of language, literacy, and content; and their overall confidence in preparing candidates for teaching ELLs in K-12 settings.

### Theoretical Framework

Our project's overarching approach to PD drew from the critical core features proposed by Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) and Desimone (2009), which encompasses content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. According to these authors, focusing on content within PD contexts plays the greatest role in teachers' learning. When teachers' knowledge of subject matter content is augmented, their skill in lesson presentation increases. Hence, this growth leads to their improved pedagogical practices, and has some bearing on student achievement.

Active learning takes place in a variety of forms (e.g., interactive feedback and discussion) and should be consistent with teachers' knowledge and beliefs and school, district, and state reform and policies that are discussed in PD. Through coherent active learning over a span of time and a number of activity hours, teachers' intellectual and pedagogical growth will likely take root whether they collectively participate as members of the same school, district, grade level or department. Furthermore, the above essential PD components are aligned to many of the 2001 No Child Left Behind's core features of "high quality" PD, as well as the Teaching Commission's (2004) report, *Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action*, which emphasizes coherence and collective participation.

The SELLS project incorporated other research-supported PD components, such as opportunity for participants to reflect in a collaborative format (Farmer, Gerretson, & Lassak, 2003) and modeling of practices that promote student learning (Waxman & Tellez, 2002). To be effective teachers and scholars, faculty need to be provided with purposeful, structured, and sustained PD activities and to work with colleagues as a community of adult learners (Farmer et al., 2003). Away from their offices and potential distractions, faculty will more likely engage in meaningful discourse (Beck & Kosnick, 2002) to challenge their own assumptions about teaching-learning matters, specifically, how their teaching directly impacts student learning outcomes (de Jong & Harper, 2008).

The practice of teacher educators must be an example for their candidates to follow. Content faculty tend to view themselves as subject matter specialists and identify with their disciplinary interest more so than with their pedagogy (Brancato, 2003). To gain pedagogical content knowledge, teachers need not only to learn what to teach but also how to teach, which encompasses an essential knowledge base of self, students, and subject matter, and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 2000; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002). Furthermore, teachers must also critically inquire as to why certain methods or

approaches work (or do not work), understand and implement educational theory and research, and develop reflection and a problem-solving orientation (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Farmer et al., 2003; NBPTS, 2002).

Finally, faculty need opportunities to negotiate learning within the context of their own practice. Professional development undertaken in isolation from teachers' daily work has rarely led to change in practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006a); teachers need to receive specific strategies directly relating to their immediate context (Guskey, 1986). Faculty need to see themselves as learners, evaluate their newly developing knowledge, and recognize the interaction between learning and teaching to improve their practice (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Additionally, they should aim to view teaching and classroom events from their students' perspectives.

To implement the above recommendations, faculty will need to develop a community of inquiry where they collectively search for meaning in their work and be afforded sufficient built-in chunks of time over an extended, sustained period (Brown & Benken, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998). Moreover, faculty will need to adopt an "inquiry as stance" construct and reflect upon the inquiry-knowledge-professional practice interrelatedness. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1998) elaborated on this notion of critical inquiry, which is intended to:

Problematize the roles teachers play in designing and implementing initiatives in their own learning. When groups of teachers and others come together to learn, there are issues related to negotiating the agenda, sharing power and decision making, representing the work of the group, and dealing with the inevitable tensions of individual and collective purposes and viewpoints. (p. 295)

The reflection process offers the faculty fertile opportunities to examine how learning objectives in one course builds upon those in another, how student learning outcomes are integrated in clinical field-based experience, and how courses are coherently organized within the secondary credential program continuum.

### Professional Development Program Structure

The PD program was organized into semester-long cohorts within the secondary teacher credential program (Gomez-Zwiep et al., 2013). Collective participation involved bringing together faculty in each cohort representing one or more courses they were teaching to enhance their knowledge and pedagogical skills to integrate ELL-based instruction into their own practice, and to ensure uniformity of implementation across course sections. Faculty participation was voluntary,

and they were provided with the equivalent of 3-unit release time from teaching. Program activities included: structured intensive seminar sessions focusing on specific issues (e.g., instructional approaches for English language development [ELD]), lively discussions, reflective dialogues, guest speakers, and instructional multi-media material. Additionally, faculty completed 15 hours of observations in selected K-12 classrooms, guided by the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008), which placed in context the need for implementing evidenced-based practices in their university courses. Finally, faculty examined and revised their syllabi, key assignments, or student teaching practicum observation protocols (field supervisors only) to align to state standards for ELD instruction (e.g., California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2006).

### **Structured Intensive Seminar Sessions**

The PD program included nine 4-hour seminar sessions spread over a 16-week semester. Each session was facilitated by one or more trained members of the administrative team. These seminars centered on theories of how ELLs acquire English language and content and effective methods and strategies for supporting these students' academic and social development. Selected presenters knowledgeable in their respective fields (e.g., linguistics, language acquisition, curriculum and instruction) were integrated into these sessions.

For example, one of the selected texts was *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The Sheltered Instruction Observation Model* by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008). In her PD session, the presenter (also co-author of the book) presented the theoretical and practical applications of the sheltered instruction observation model (SIOP) text to classroom contexts. Using videotaped lesson vignettes, the presenter assisted faculty in identifying SIOP features found in these teaching episodes and determining the effectiveness of strategies used. At the conclusion of each session, the PD facilitator guided the participants in making sense of and connecting the session content to reading concepts in language acquisition, instructional strategies, or other related matter, and helped to clarify any discrepant interpretations the participants may have had (Nguyen, 2009).

### **Reading Assignments**

To provide content faculty from a variety of disciplines with a shared theoretical base, Genesee et al.'s (2006) *Educating English Language Learners: A Synthesis of Research Evidence* text was selected. This

primary text synthesized research on the education of ELLs in the US over the last 25 years. Its primary focus is on the acquisition of oral language skills in English of ELLs, their development of literacy, and (reading and writing) skills in English, instructional issues in teaching literacy, and achievement in academic domains (e.g., reading, mathematics, science, history). The second SIOP text (as mentioned above) includes practical guidelines for developing language and content objectives, and discussion questions for reflection and application. Additionally, first source research articles were chosen to supplement areas explored in texts, such as the role of diversity (e.g., language, culture, socio-economic, immigration status) in educational contexts and its impact on teaching and learning (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Nguyen, 2012). Specific chapters or articles were assigned for each seminar, along with guiding questions, to support concepts and ideas discussed by each of the seminar presenters.

### **Structured Content-Specific Observations**

All participants spent 15 hours (spread over 16 weeks) observing district-identified exemplary teachers in the SELLS project's partner school district. A guide was provided with suggestions for focusing on specific observation areas (i.e., 10 hours with a teacher in their content area, and 5 hours with an ELD/different discipline teacher). Observations were documented using the SIOP instrument. During their initial classroom visit, the faculty paid close attention to the school, its surrounding social environment, classroom ambiance (e.g., teacher-student, student-student, and student-teacher social dynamics and interaction patterns), and location of the classroom in relation to other classes/programs (e.g., administration building, portable bungalow). In subsequent visits, the faculty concentrated on the eight SIOP features (i.e., lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment). Observation notes were documented in logs and SIOP features recorded onto protocol sheets.

There is evidence to suggest that teachers who adopt features of the SIOP find this 7-year research model effective, not only with their ELLs, but also with their English-only students. The protocol instrument is widely used in the US and internationally, and has been validated by its authors (Echevarria et al., 2008). It is a lesson-planning and delivery approach composed of 30 instructional strategies grouped into eight components: preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment. When teachers design high-quality explicit instruction both in language and

content to give their students access to the core curriculum, their ELLs score significantly higher and tend to make greater gains in English writing (de Jong & Harper, 2008; Genesee & Riches, 2006). Hence, modeling of effective strategies was an integral element in our PD design and activities, which were implemented by seminar presenters and district-selected secondary content classroom teachers who participated in our project.

### **Revision of Syllabi and Assignments**

Time was built into the last three PD sessions for faculty to engage in cross-disciplinary discussion of the California teachers of English learners (CTEL) standards (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2006). The faculty had the opportunity to examine student learning outcomes of courses (their own and those across the secondary credential program) and revise their own syllabi and assignments or practicum observation protocol (those supervising student teachers). In addition, former faculty participants were invited to return as guest facilitators during the last three seminars. These faculty discussed how participation in the PD enhanced their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge of ELL-related issues and was subsequently reflected in their teaching practice (e.g., scaffolded instruction, specially designed academic instruction in English strategies). Furthermore, in revising their course assignments, the faculty participants required teacher candidates to address specific academic (e.g., English language proficiency levels) and social needs of ELLs in designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### **Methodology**

Participants ( $N = 75$ ) were full-time and adjunct faculty teaching and/or supervising in the secondary credential program representing five colleges (Arts, Engineering, Health & Human Services, Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences & Mathematics) and 11 subject disciplines (e.g., mathematics, history, science). Participation in the study was voluntary.

Data were collected over 5 years (2007-2012). Primary data sources included: pre- and post-surveys (examining beliefs, knowledge, and confidence levels about instructing ELLs), observation reflections of exemplary K-12 teachers, evaluations of individual PD sessions and overall program, revised course syllabi/assignments/observation protocols, and semi-structured interviews (conducted by an external evaluator not affiliated with the project). Surveys items were adapted (with permission) from diversity inventories from two other universities, which had been used for more than one decade.

This mixed method study was guided by the following research questions: (1) In what ways did the faculty's knowledge, skills, beliefs and confidence expand after having participated in the PD to prepare secondary teacher candidates for instructing content to ELLs? (2) What PD experiences and/or learning approaches did the faculty find to be most effective in supporting their preparation of secondary teacher candidates for working with ELLs?

Data analysis was in the form of descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2009), reporting gains and losses in each category. Paired t-tests were performed to further examine quantifiable portions of pre- and post-surveys, reflections, and assessment instruments. When possible, data were cross-tabulated and correlations between PD experiences and understanding of ELL-related issues were determined. A qualitative method was used to analyze participant responses to varied data sources through which emergent themes were coded based on level of emphasis and frequency. The goal was to understand what the activities meant to the faculty within the context of the university/school district settings, as well as the process by which events took place, leading to outcomes that were shaped by these unique circumstances (Maxwell, 2005).

## **Results**

### **Research Question #1**

Results indicate growth for all faculty participants in knowledge, skills, and beliefs/attitudes about teaching ELLs, as well as confidence in meeting the needs of ELLs in their future instruction.

**Knowledge and skills.** Prior to the PD program, many participants were unaware of state-required processes used to: (1) determine if a student qualifies as an ELL based on the Home Language Survey; (2) administer a State language test to identify an ELL's proficiency level (i.e., beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, advanced); and (3) place an ELL in the appropriate trajectory for programmatic and instructional purposes. In Table 1, we present pre-post survey results for which participants' perceptions of their knowledge and skills growth was highly statistically significant. This growth occurred mainly in the areas of identifying ELL students' ELD proficiency levels and implementing appropriate methods for supporting these students' development in their language and content areas.

For example, after the PD, participants across cohorts increased agreement significantly with the statement, "I am familiar with the characteristics of the different English language development (ELD) levels of ELLs" (see Table 1). Additionally, participants demonstrated deeper understanding of the critical role that scaffolded instruction played in differentiating their instruction to support ELLs' attainment of academic

Table 1  
*Pre-Post Survey T-Test Results: Faculty Knowledge and Skills*

Faculty Survey Item	Mean Difference (pre-post)	<i>t</i> value	Sig (2-tailed)
I am familiar with the California English language development (ELD) standards.	-1.45	-6.759	0.000
I am familiar with the characteristics of the different English language development (ELD) levels of ELLs.	-1.11	-6.888	0.000
I can model specific strategies for modifying instruction for ELLs in my content area.	-.75	-5.994	0.000
I can identify strategies for assessing ELLs in my content area.	-1.22	-7.865	0.000
I can develop models of appropriate standards-based assessments for various levels of ELLs in my content area.	-1.15	-7.181	0.000
<u>My course content is aligned with the CTEL standards.</u>	-.96	-4.817	0.000

*Note.* Items were scaled 1-6: 1 (*not sure*), 2 (*strongly disagree*), to 6 (*strongly agree*).

content based on their proficiency levels (see Table 1). Participants completed documents and survey/interview data also revealed that participants learned multi-sensory approaches for making content comprehensible and accessible to ELLs.

Furthermore, participants were introduced to the CTEL, a framework for how ELLs must be instructed across disciplines in order to gain proficiency in English and academic content. As one participant stated in an interview:

One was the CTEL standards and the other was the ELD standards. Do you know I have never had a copy of these until I took the course. We actually did quite a lot of analysis of these. So this is one of the things I am going to be acquainting my student teachers and interns with. I'm going to spend quite a bit of time and I feel very strongly about them getting official documents for example the ELA Framework. There is a section in the ELA framework, just a few pages that address second language learners so I've always been able to show them that, have them read it and discuss it.

Her comment echoes many; namely, participants reported the PD to be effective in enhancing their knowledge and skills.

Qualitative data analyses of different sets of documents (i.e., differentiated lesson plans, revised syllabi, seminar discussions) supported participants' growth in knowledge and skills. For example, an examination of their differentiated lesson plans revealed that participants understood what ELD standards are, for whom they are written, and how they can apply them to their own practice in preparing future teachers. Specifically, participants demonstrated correct usage of aligning ELD standards (listening, speaking, reading,

writing) to ELLs' proficiency levels (beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, advanced) when designing content-based lessons and activities. For example, faculty were able to identify what an ELL at an early intermediate proficiency level can be expected to do (give simple and short answers to teacher's questions) and how the teacher can facilitate that student's learning (pose a question, and write it on the board if necessary, using familiar examples). Participants also articulated the need for scaffolding abstract concepts, deeply embedded in the textbook, by providing visual tools such as diagrams, graphic organizers, and lecture outlines/notes to help ELLs organize ideas in a concrete manner (Crawford, 2004; de Jong & Harper, 2008; Genesee et al., 2006).

Furthermore, revised syllabi indicated that participants re-examined the student learning outcomes or course objectives of their respective courses to ensure that the specific academic, linguistic, and social needs of ELLs would be addressed in their course topics, discussions, and key assignments. For example, in an English methods course, the introduction section read, "The purpose of the course is to provide students with a broad overview of teaching and learning in contemporary classrooms." The participant teaching this course added, "serving both native speakers of English and English learners." As a key assignment, this participant had teacher candidates design instructional strategies and assessment practices, but also required "differentiated instruction and assessment for English Language Learners." Finally, in addressing the structure and organization of schools, including an appreciation of current education issues, trends, and reform efforts, the participant added "including student access to and achievement of content curriculum mastery," suggesting tremendous growth in her ability to acknowledge that inequity is deeply embedded in US

society, and that access to education is not often evenly-distributed and is far from being power-neutral.

**Beliefs and attitudes.** Pre-post survey data suggest positive, statistically significant growth in participants' beliefs regarding ELL instruction in K-12 settings (see Table 2). At the onset of the PD, few participants recognized that the background knowledge, cultural experiences, and educational needs of ELLs are unique, and tend to differ from those of their native-English peers (de Jong & Harper, 2008; Nguyen, 2012). Participants came to realize that they must understand these specific needs and be able to scaffold and model instruction (Echevarria et al., 2008; Nguyen, 2012) in preparing secondary candidates for working successfully with ELLs. Specifically, on the post-survey, participant responses were highly significant in many areas (see Table 2). These areas included: knowing how to identify characteristics and needs of ELLs, understanding how ELLs learn content in English, and recognizing the importance of ELLs' prior educational experience and primary language in supporting their simultaneous language and content acquisition in the classroom. For example, when faculty first participated in PD, many thought that K-12 students should not be permitted to use their heritage

languages, as it would impede students' process of acquiring English and/or cause confusion between languages. Participants came to understand that the need for allowing ELLs to use their home language when posing questions or seeking clarification for abstract concepts embedded in the subject matter, such as history-social sciences (Nguyen, 2009). Participants also acknowledged the critical role scaffolded instruction played in supporting ELLs develop literacy (in the first language [L1] and/or second language [L2]) and experience academic success.

Following participation, there was a distinct shift in attitude for many participants as to how they viewed their teacher preparation role. These participants recognized that subject matter competency is critical, but so is knowledge of students' specific needs. As one participant noted in an interview:

I personally see and believe in the importance of knowing how to work with ELLs now. That is part of my teaching philosophy now and therefore now I share it with my students so they can see and believe in its importance. I refer to it more. I ask my students about it more, finding easy opportunities to bring it into our class discussions.

Table 2  
*Pre-Post Survey T-Test Results: Faculty Beliefs and Attitudes*

Faculty Survey Item	Mean difference (pre-post)	t value	Sig (2-tailed)
A K-12 student's previous educational experience either in the U.S. or home country is a major predictor of his/her present performance in school.	-.49	-3.051	0.004
Students who have not yet gained proficiency in English should be allowed to use their primary/home language as a resource for supporting their language and content development in English.	-.77	-5.272	0.000
A teacher without specific training can effectively meet the academic needs of ELLs.	.52	2.842	0.006
It is important for teachers to understand the academic needs of ELLs in order to teach them effectively.	-.45	-3.876	0.000
Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies can be beneficial to all students in the classroom.	-.26	-3.594	0.001
All teachers should have some knowledge about how students learn content through a second language.	-.29	-3.585	0.001
Teachers are responsible only for the subject matter to which they are assigned to teach, not for the language that conveys the content knowledge.	.31	2.122	0.037
The ability to model instruction to support ELLs' acquisition of language, literacy, and content should be a teacher's goal.	-.29	-2.527	0.014
It is important to better prepare our teacher candidates to teach ELLs.	-.11	-2.314	0.023
Schools should try to assimilate minority students into the mainstream culture and should teach only English.	.55	3.189	0.002

*Note.* Items were scaled 1-6: 1 (*not sure*), 2 (*strongly disagree*), to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Most participants also realized that, although many teacher candidates were proficient in English, they had been former ELLs. Therefore, the candidates could have benefited from their instructors modeling effective strategies to support their academic English language and content development.

**Confidence.** Responses by participants indicated a highly statistically significant increase in confidence in their ability to meet the ELLs' needs following the PD experience; these survey items are presented in Table 3. For example, participants were more likely to agree with statements like, "I am confident in my ability to prepare teacher candidates in my content area to meet the needs of ELLs," "I feel knowledgeable about effective teaching strategies that maximize academic success for ELLs," and "I feel knowledgeable about how to assess ELLs in culturally and linguistically fair ways."

As participants' confidence grew, they commented on how their newly-developed perspectives would influence their future practice. As one participant stated during the end-of-program evaluation,

This professional experience has resulted in the restructuring of an academic course. The next step will be to develop content related to the teaching of ELL students. Ultimately, this will effect change in the way that future teachers teach ELL students.

Some past faculty participants who taught multiple courses in the secondary program returned the second time and joined later cohorts. Having implemented revised documents in their respective courses, these faculty (past participants) noticed their candidates were better able to envision how effective methods can support ELLs' academic and social development.

## Research Question #2

**Effective program elements.** Data indicate that participants found readings and seminar topics essential to their development. For example, participants were

introduced to language acquisition theories (Krashen, 1995), stressing that "good teaching" alone is inadequate for helping ELLs gain content and academic language in English-only classrooms; for many, it may take up to 7 years to achieve proficiency in English (Crawford, 2004).

Participants also valued cross-disciplinary collaboration with other colleagues and discussions of misconceptions about how ELLs acquire language and content. As one participant commented in an interview, "You're sitting there with faculty from other subject areas and we're all equally as ignorant, or equally as knowledgeable about this subject area. Having the opportunity to share that information, . . . it was very collegial." Additionally, discourse within and across disciplines afforded participants opportunities to engage in meaningful and facilitated discourse, thus challenging their own assumptions relative to teaching and learning and the impact their pedagogical actions have on students' learning outcomes (Gomez-Zwiep et al., 2013). The collaboration and critical discourse empowered them to try different methods and negotiate learning within the context of their own practice.

Another program element participating faculty ranked highly on program evaluations (4.0 out of 4.0) was the required 15 hours of observations in district-identified K-12 classrooms of exemplary teachers. Participants agreed that viewing and critiquing selected videotaped lessons of content classroom teachers coupled with briefings with the PD facilitator and seminar presenters were purposeful in highlighting how the components of the SIOP model were operationalized in local school contexts. However, participants found observations (using the SIOP protocol) of real teachers with real students (including ELLs) in actual classrooms to have deepened their understanding of how these teachers planned their lessons, selected relevant activities, actively engaged learners through flexible grouping structures, and strategically assessed student learning. As one participant noted in an interview:

Table 3  
*Pre-Post Survey T-Test Results: Faculty Confidence*

Faculty Survey Item	Mean difference (pre-post)	t value	Sig (2-tailed)
I am confident in my ability to prepare teacher candidates in my content area to meet the needs of ELLs.	-.76	-4.763	0.000
I feel knowledgeable about effective teaching strategies that maximize academic success for ELLs.	-1.34	-9.843	0.000
I feel knowledgeable about how to assess ELLs in culturally and linguistically fair ways.	-1.33	-9.393	0.000

*Note.* Items were scaled 1-6: 1 (*not sure/no knowledge*), 2 (*strongly disagree/minimal knowledge*), to 6 (*strongly agree/highly knowledgeable*).

I think the opportunity to go visit teachers, or classroom teachers modeling some of the strategies we learned about was indeed very helpful. . . [I]t's one thing to sit here and talk about it, it's even one thing to sit here and think up things that we might do or we might say to our students to do, but then to go see a teacher actually doing it, it enhances what we can say to our students.

The 15-hour fieldwork further reinforced the evidence-based practices in the literature and provided tangible examples for how appropriate methods and strategies can be implemented in secondary classrooms, which faculty found to be overall most valuable.

## Discussion

In our process of analyzing and reflecting upon our 5-year project, we asked ourselves: What components of secondary PD development are key to altering the faculty's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior about addressing the needs of ELLs in urban settings? Our project's overarching approach to PD drew from the critical core features proposed by Garet et al. (2001) and Desimone (2009), which encompasses content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. Participants were afforded ample opportunities to engage in active learning as they applied readings to specific methods in their disciplines and negotiated teaching/learning within the context of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). In addition, the SELLS Project emphasized coherence with regard to teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and state policies for ELLs. The duration of the PD, spread over 16 weeks ( $> 36$  hours contact time), was accomplished through voluntary participation of cross-disciplinary faculty (with a three-unit of release time), and facilitated substantive interaction and discourse (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998). Through collective participation, faculty challenged their own knowledge and beliefs/attitudes about how diverse students learn and develop within secondary contexts (Genesee & Riches, 2006; Nguyen, 2009; Reeves, 2006).

Our PD program incorporated structured activities to support faculty growth as they attempted to bridge theory-and-practice in their discipline-specific content and pedagogy (e.g., the 15-hour observation component; Gomez-Zwiep et al., 2013). We recognized that content focus of teacher learning is of paramount importance; thus, we linked PD activities to how ELLs learn specific content, including faculty observations in selected district-approved classrooms. These exemplary teachers modeled effective approaches to engage ELLs in critical thinking while building on their knowledge/experiences (Echevarria & Graves, 2001). The PD offered the faculty chances to reflect upon newly-introduced language

acquisition concepts and discuss with colleagues in a supportive and collaborative manner (Farmer et al., 2003). The shift in faculty's thought process is significant in that the faculty expressed commitment to restructure their courses to address the needs of ELLs more specifically, model content-specific effective methods in their courses, address ELL-related issues in their class discussions/assignments, and alter how they have been preparing secondary candidates for educating ELLs. The SELLS structure validated the faculty's prior knowledge and advanced their understanding of specific evidence-based practices for providing content access to secondary ELLs.

## Significance and Implications

The study's results contribute to what we know regarding enhancing faculty's theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, beliefs, and skills about how ELLs acquire academic English and content and how socio-cultural factors influence their academic and social development (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Nguyen, 2012; Gomez-Zwiep et al., 2013). Additionally, it helps to inform how universities can structure PD for faculty to better equip secondary candidates for teaching ELLs. Professional development for teacher education faculty presents the unique challenge of validating what these faculty members bring to the table as experts in their field, while simultaneously providing the content and support necessary to develop new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and confidence. The study outlines a PD program for ELL instruction that extends beyond a series of workshops to provide a structured, long-term and sustained PD effort for faculty who prepare teachers for diverse classrooms, yet do not necessarily possess the required knowledge of the academic, linguistic, and social needs of ELLs. The need for PD that is focused on teaching practices that effectively address students' diverse needs and backgrounds has never been greater (Gardiner, 2000; Gardiner, Candield-Davis, & Anderson, 2009).

Although considered experts in the field of education, teacher education faculty can benefit from PD opportunities to explore relevant issues that may be tangential to their area of expertise, yet essential to the preparation of prospective teachers. Additionally, they need focused and structured time to reflect on practice and collaborate with fellow faculty and K-12 educators to explore and enhance practice (Brown & Benken, 2009). Yet, research that specifically explores the complexity within faculty providing PD for fellow faculty in teacher education programs is glaringly missing in the existing literature on teacher development, as is research that explicitly discusses how teacher education faculty can learn from K-12 partners. Studies on programs that outline pathways for

how to best design PD for faculty (education and content) working with teacher candidates are needed. Our study explored PD with this unique group and in particular their efforts related to ELL instruction, and thus contributes to this body of literature. Further studies that examine faculty's ability to implement learnings related to ELLs in their university courses are needed, as well as studies that follow their students (prospective teachers) into K-12 settings.

### Limitations

Although it has the potential to guide future PD with faculty, it is important to recognize five primary factors that contributed to the findings in this study: (1) it was based on a program conducted at an urban, state university with faculty dedicated to diversity, professional development, and teacher preparation; (2) participation in the PD of the program was voluntary and monetarily supported; (3) the project and PD were envisioned and implemented by a collaborate team, who represented multiple academic disciplines/departments across the university and a wealth of past and current K-12 teaching experiences; (4) participating faculty represented education and content departments across the university, thereby allowing for interdisciplinary discourse; and (5) the project received administrative support across the university. We caution that it may be challenging to institute such a program without institutional and faculty buy-in to the goals of the program, the ability to support faculty time (Caffarella & Zinn, 1999), and a commitment to diversity and teacher preparation, particularly in urban settings.

Furthermore, this program placed as central the K-12 component; faculty need models of exemplary practice, just as prospective teachers do. These experiences in real classrooms allow university faculty to witness first hand how effective strategies are implemented when teaching content to ELLs, which then facilitates changes in their own practices. Finally, the scope of our study was limited to examining participants' experiences within the PD and their self-report of improved instruction; we were not able to follow-up with observations in participants' university courses.

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